

Walking in the Spirit

Ephesians 5:18

September 23, 2018

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God wants us to live a Spirit-filled life.

I. We are commanded to not let alcohol control us.

a) Consumption of alcohol is a matter of Christian liberty.

Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink... (Colossians 2:16)

He makes grass grow for the cattle,
and plants for people to cultivate—
bringing forth food from the earth:
wine that gladdens human hearts,
oil to make their faces shine,
and bread that sustains their hearts. (Psalms 104:14-15)

Stop drinking only water, and use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses. (1 Timothy 5:23)

But whoever has doubts is condemned if they eat, because their eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin. (Romans 14:23)

They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer. (1 Timothy 4:3-5)

Jesus turned water into wine. (Turn to John 2:1-11)

“after the guests have had too much to drink” (NIV)

“have well drunk” (KJV)

“have drunk freely.” (NASB)

“when everyone is full.” (NLT)

Greek methuo “drink to intoxication.” – to become drunk.

When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. (James 1:13-14)

b) Consumption of alcohol is a matter for great Christian wisdom.

1) **Abstinence** is commended (and commanded in a number of cases) in Scripture.

Priests

You and your sons are not to drink wine or other fermented drink whenever you go into the tent of meeting, or you will die. This is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come... (Leviticus 10:9)

Nazarites

...abstain from wine and other fermented drink and must not drink vinegar made from wine or other fermented drink. They must not drink grape juice or eat grapes or raisins. (Numbers 6:3)

Kings

It is not for kings, Lemuel—

it is not for kings to drink wine,

not for rulers to crave beer,

lest they drink and forget what has been decreed,

and deprive all the oppressed of their rights. (Proverbs 31:4-5)

Recabites

But they replied, “We do not drink wine, because our forefather Jehonadab son of Rekab gave us this command: ‘Neither you nor your descendants must ever drink wine. (Jeremiah 35:6)

“Jehonadab son of Rekab will never fail to have a descendant to serve me” (Jeremiah 35:19)

Daniel

But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way. (Daniel 1:8)

John the Baptist

... he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born. (Luke 1:15)

2) **Drunkenness** is condemned in Scripture.

Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery... (Romans 13:13)

Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were... (1 Corinthians 6:9-11a)

“Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and [the Day of Judgment] will close on you suddenly like a trap. (Luke 21:34)

II. Overindulgence has many harmful effects.

a) On your wallet

Listen, my son, and be wise,
and set your heart on the right path:
Do not join those who drink too much wine
or gorge themselves on meat,
for drunkards and gluttons become poor,
and drowsiness clothes them in rags. (Proverbs 23:19-21)

b) On your health

Who has woe? Who has sorrow?
Who has strife? Who has complaints?
Who has needless bruises? Who has bloodshot eyes?
Those who linger over wine,
who go to sample bowls of mixed wine.
Do not gaze at wine when it is red,
when it sparkles in the cup,
when it goes down smoothly!
In the end it bites like a snake
and poisons like a viper.
Your eyes will see strange sights,
and your mind will imagine confusing things.
You will be like one sleeping on the high seas,
lying on top of the rigging.
“They hit me,” you will say, “but I’m not hurt!
They beat me, but I don’t feel it!
When will I wake up
so I can find another drink?” (Proverbs 23:29-35)

c) On your personality

Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler;
whoever is led astray by them is not wise. (Proverbs 20:1)

d) On your relationships

It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother or sister to fall. (Romans 14:21)

Be careful, however, that the exercise of your rights does not become a stumbling block to the weak. For if someone with a weak conscience sees you, with all your knowledge, eating in an idol’s temple, won’t that person be emboldened to eat what is sacrificed to idols? So this weak brother or sister, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge. When you sin against them in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. (1 Corinthians 8:9-12)

e) On your spiritual life

Woe to those who rise early in the morning
to run after their drinks,
who stay up late at night
till they are inflamed with wine.
They have harps and lyres at their banquets,
pipes and timbrels and wine,
but they have no regard for the deeds of the LORD,
no respect for the work of his hands. (Isaiah 5:11-12)

III. Instead, we are to be controlled by the Holy Spirit

...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23)

So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves. The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions. But when you are directed by the Spirit, you are not under obligation to the law of Moses.

When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God. (Galatians 5:16-21)